

**Supporting Statement for SSA-7004
Request for Social Security Statement
20 CFR 404.810
OMB No. 0960-0466**

A. Justification

1. Introduction/Authoring Laws and Regulations

Section 205(c)(2)(A) of the *Social Security Act* (the *Act*) requires that the Commissioner of Social Security establish and maintain records of wages paid to, and amounts of self-employment income derived by, each individual as well as the periods in which such wages were paid and such income derived. In addition, upon request, the Commissioner shall inform any individual or his survivor of the periods during which employers paid those wages or an individual derived such income. Section 1143(a)(2) of the *Act* requires that the Commissioner "...shall provide upon the request of an eligible individual a Social Security account Statement (hereinafter referred to as "Statement")." 20 CFR 404.810 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* provides that an individual may obtain a Statement of earnings or quarters of coverage, as shown in the Social Security Administration (SSA) records, by making a written request. SSA established Form SSA-7004 to fulfill the "written request" requirement.

2. Description of Collection

SSA strives to help the public better understand Social Security programs, and the Social Security Statement is a major tool in this educational effort. We issue the Statement automatically each year to workers age 25 and older who do not yet receive benefits. Workers also can request a Statement at any time. For requested Statements, SSA needs information provided by the worker on Form SSA-7004 to identify the appropriate Social Security earnings record; extract the recorded earnings history; calculate estimates of potential benefits; and produce and mail the resulting Statement. The information provided on the Statement includes:

- Complete earnings information to assure workers that their Social Security records are accurate;
- Realistic estimates of future retirement benefits that consider the individual worker's anticipated future earnings and expected retirement age; and
- Estimates of potential disability and survivor benefits for the workers and their families

Respondents are workers who do not currently receive benefits, and wish to request a copy of their Social Security Statement.

3. Use of Information Technology to Collect the Information

The public can request a Statement by submitting the paper Form SSA-7004. Workers complete and mail this form to SSA's Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Data Operations Center for processing. They can also transmit requests electronically via the Internet from SSA's website at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov> (during FY 2009, we received 74 percent of the requests via online services). When SSA receives requests through either

method, we process the information to prepare, print and mail the Statement to the requester.

4. Why We Cannot Use Duplicate Information

The nature of the information we are collecting and the manner in which we are collecting it preclude duplication. SSA does not use another collection instrument to obtain similar data.

5. Minimizing Burden on Small Respondents

This collection does not affect small businesses or other small entities.

6. Consequence of Not Collecting Information or Collecting it Less Frequently

If SSA did not collect this information, individuals would be unable to exercise their statutory right to submit (in writing) a request for copies of their earnings or credits (also known as quarters of coverage) as shown on SSA records. Since we process these requests only upon voluntary submission, we cannot collect this information less frequently. There are no technical or legal obstacles to prevent burden reduction.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances that would cause SSA to conduct this information collection in a manner inconsistent with *5 CFR 1320.5*. SSA does not require workers to request Statements; however, we also do not prohibit their doing so more often than quarterly if they so choose. For example, for financial planning, they may want to get Statements using different assumptions as to future earnings amounts or ages at which they will stop working. In these cases, SSA needs a separate request form for each Statement.

8. Solicitation of Public Comment and Other Consultations with the Public

The 60-day advance Federal Register Notice published on March 4, 2010, at 75 FR 9992, and SSA received no public comments. The second Notice published on May 27, 2010, at 75 FR 29797. If we receive any comments in response to the 30-day Notice, we will forward them to OMB. SSA did not consult members of the public in the development of this form.

9. Payment or Gifts to Respondents

SSA provides no payment or gifts to the respondents.

10. Assurances of Confidentiality

SSA protects and holds confidential the information it collects in accordance with *42 U.S.C. 1306*, *20 CFR 401* and *402*, *5 U.S.C. 552* (Freedom of Information Act), *5 U.S.C. 552a* (Privacy Act of 1974), and OMB Circular No. A-130.

SSA's system encrypts requests transmitted electronically using the Secure Socket Layer Security Protocol, an industry standard protocol used by banks and other financial institutions for Internet transactions.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The information collection does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimates of Public Reporting Burden

We estimate approximately 553,000 workers use Form SSA-7004 annually. Each worker takes an average of 5 minutes to complete a request, for 46,083 burden hours. In FY 2009, SSA received approximately 127,000 paper requests and 426,000 electronic requests.

Modality	Number of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Average Burden per Response (minutes)	Total Annual Burden (hours)
Paper Version	127,000	1	5	10,583
Internet Version	426,000	1	5	35,500
Total	553,000			46,083

The total burden for this ICR is 46,083. This figure represents burden hours, and we did not calculate a separate cost burden.

13. Annual Cost Burden to the Respondents (Other)

This collection does not impose a known cost burden to the respondents.

14. Annual Cost To Federal Government

The annual cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$152,400.00. This estimate is a projection of the costs for printing, distributing the forms, and collecting the information. This estimate is less than previous years as a result of improved tracking of the number of requests, the steady increase in computer literacy, and the burgeoning volume of automatic yearly Statements issued. The costs for handling those Statement requests received through the Internet (about 74 percent of the total) are negligible.

15. Program Changes or Adjustments to the Information Collection Request

The public reporting burden increased because more workers are requesting their statements. Per SSA's records, the number of requested statements fluctuates per year. In addition, as more people use the automatic online benefit calculators to estimate their potential benefits, they wish to request statements from SSA to verify their findings.

16. Plans for Publication Information Collection Results

SSA will not publish the results of the information collection.

17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date

OMB granted SSA an exemption from the requirement to print the OMB expiration date on its program forms. SSA produces millions of public-use forms with life cycles exceeding those of an OMB approval. Since SSA does not periodically revise and reprint its public-use forms (e.g., on an annual basis), OMB granted this exemption so SSA would not have to destroy stocks of otherwise usable forms with expired OMB approval dates, avoiding Government waste.

18. Exception to Certification Statement

SSA is not requesting an exception to the certification requirements at 5 *CFR* 1320.9 and related provisions at 5 *CFR* 1320.8(b)(3).

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

SSA does not use statistical methods for this information collection.